

NN/LM PNR
Environmental Scan- Executive Summary
Working Draft 10/16/08

This executive summary focuses on the regional picture—information about the five states in our region: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington. The full environmental scan includes information about national trends and also presents more detail with sources for all data.

Demographics:

The Pacific Northwest Region of the NN/LM comprises 27% of the land mass of the United States and, as of the 2006 US Census, contains 4% of the population of the United States. The region's two largest states each have fewer than a million residents. Alaska has the lowest population density of any state (1.1 person per square mile) and fewer residents than Baltimore County, MD. The nation's fourth largest state, Montana is also sparsely populated, at 6.2 people per square mile, and has fewer residents than Fairfax County, VA. (See Appendix A for census by state).

- All five states have a higher percentage of their population as American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) than the national average of 1%. Alaska has 15.4%.
- More than half of the nation's AIAN population lives in urban areas. Urban AIAN suffer from significant health disparities and, since they are generally spread out across urban centers they are often not recognized by the wider population. The Pacific Northwest's two largest cities (Seattle, WA and Portland, OR) rank within the nation's top 20 cities with largest urban AIAN population, and Anchorage, AK (ranking 75th in size compared to other cities in the nation) has the 4th largest urban AIAN population in the US.
- The region has a small African American population compared to other parts of the country: Idaho and Montana's populations are the smallest in the nation, each with less than 1%; in Oregon less than 2% of the population is African American; and in Washington and Alaska, less than 4% of the population is African American, compared with the US average of almost 13%.
- There are also growing Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and Latino populations in places in the Northwest.
- Among the country's 25 largest metropolitan areas, the Seattle-Bellevue-Tacoma region had the highest concentration of mixed-race residents, with the Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton region ranking 5th.
- Alaska has the youngest population in the United States and the other four are near the US average of 12.4% of their population over age 65.
- All of the states in the region, except Idaho, have above the US average of 24.4% of people who have a Bachelors degree or higher.
- In 2006, the national percentage of people who lack health insurance was 15.9%; Washington and Idaho have more people with health insurance while Alaska, Montana, and Oregon all have more who are uninsured.
- As of 2006, the national percentage of people below poverty level during the previous 12 months was 13.3%, and the same was true for Oregon. Montana had more people below poverty level (13.6%), and Idaho, Washington, and Alaska had less people below the federal poverty level compared to the national percentage.
- As of July 2008 the national unemployment rate was 5.7%. Alaska and Oregon have higher rates, Idaho's and Montana's are lower, and in Washington unemployment is at the national average.

Education

In the Pacific Northwest, 80% of K-12 schools are public. In higher education, the split is about even between the number of public versus the number of private colleges. The region has only three medical schools. The University of Washington, under the multi-state WWAMI agreement, serves as the medical school for four of the region's states (Washington, Idaho, Montana and Alaska) plus Wyoming. Washington also has a new college of osteopathic medicine, the Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences. Oregon Health and Sciences University serves the state of Oregon. All of the region's states provide nursing education and have MPH programs. All but Alaska feature programs to educate physician assistants and pharmacists. Oregon and Washington have dental schools; Idaho and Washington train dietitians; Idaho, Oregon and Washington train speech, language and hearing disorder specialists.

Health and Health Services:

Some regional health facts: 4 of the 5 states in the Pacific Northwest Region rank among the top 10 in the nation for suicide rates, with Montana as #1 followed by Alaska (3), Idaho (7) and Oregon (10). Oregon has the highest rate of asthma in the United States. In Washington obesity has increased from 9.4% to 24.2% of the population since 2000. In Washington, Oregon, and Idaho the rate of vaccination for young children against tetanus, polio, measles and other diseases is below the national average. The entire state of Alaska is designated a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) or Medically Underserved Area (MUA). All of the states in the Pacific Northwest have large areas that are designated HPSAs or MUAs. Each state health department's web site reveals concern about a high prevalence of health disparities among minority groups.

Flat funding and budget cuts for public health programs exist in all the states of the region, and the picture of health services availability is bleak. While total number of hospitals nationwide is showing a slight increase, Idaho and Oregon had fewer hospitals in 2006 than in 2000, and Montana showed no increase. The rate of hospital beds per 1,000 people did not increase in any of the region's states, and Alaska remained level. At the same time, there was a dramatic increase in the rate of hospital visits per 1,000 population, with Alaska's more than tripling. National totals of certified nursing facilities are up, but totals are down in all five of the region's states. The average number of registered nurse (RNs) hours per resident day declined by 25 percent between 1998 and 2000 and by 14 between 2000 and 2006. Following national trends, between 2000 and 2006 the number of health care employees decreased substantially in each of the Northwest states. While the number of physicians in each of the states has increased, rural communities are challenged by physician shortages.

Technology:

Telehealth is important here in this region:

- HRSA funded 19 telehealth development programs in our region between 2005 and 2007. They funded 148 projects total.
- 51% of Alaskan rural healthcare providers have used AFHCAN (Alaska Federal Health Care Access Network) hardware or software.

Some hospitals are national technology leaders. The region has four hospitals on the 2008 "Most Wired Hospitals" list:

- Inland Northwest Health Services— Washington and Idaho Region, Spokane, Wash.
- Kootenai Medical Center, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.
- Madigan Army Medical Center, Tacoma, Wash.
- Sacred Heart Medical Center, Spokane, Wash.

The region also has two on the 2008 “Most Wired Small & Rural Hospitals” list. Neither of these hospitals has a librarian: Mason General Hospital Shelton, WA; and St. Peter’s Hospital, Helena, MT.

Several major corporations located in the region are working on healthcare IT or on provision of consumer health information on the web, including Microsoft, Healia, Google, and Healthwise.

Montana’s Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee has requested \$1.5 million in the 2010-2011 biennium to test a pilot electronic record system developed by HealthShare Montana, a non-profit organization.

Libraries:

The region’s two largest medical school libraries each have a mission to provide information for health professionals in their states. In Oregon, OHSU’s library provides access to selected electronic resources for certain licensed health professionals with funding paid for from state licensing fees as mandated by legislation. Washington has enacted similar legislation to require the University of Washington Health Sciences Library to provide access to selected electronic resources through the HEAL-WA web site, with funding from state licensing fees.

Below is a snapshot of the region’s 313 network members from the network members’ database as of 10/01/08:

<u>State</u>	Total Network Members	Hospital Libraries	Academic Libraries	Public Library members/ Total PLs in State	State Library	Other organization or library
Alaska	14	5	2	3/89	0	4
Idaho	30	13	10	3/104	1	3
Montana	49	15	22	4/79	1	7
Oregon	71	36	19	0/125	1	15
Washington	149	44	30	7/65	1	67
Total	313	113	83	17/462	4	96

More than one-third of the network members of the Pacific Northwest Region are hospital libraries. Some of these libraries may serve more than one facility, especially in the case of a health care system with satellites. Around the region, at least 54% of the health facilities with more than 50 beds have a hospital library (that is a network member)*.

There are no firm statistics on the number of hospital library closures in the region. In 2007, the RML did an audit of the PNR network membership directory, followed by a membership renewal campaign. Before the audit there were 153 hospital library network members. As of October 1, 2008, 113 network members identify themselves as hospital libraries (85 are in DOCLINE). Compared to the pre-audit count, this means there was a net loss of 40 hospital members. Of those, 5 had been DOCLINE libraries and the rest were affiliate members identified as “libraries” in the Network member directory. This number may be an understatement because some hospitals have replaced a professional librarian with administrative services personnel to take on “library” tasks (such as operating DOCLINE) along with their regular work. A hospital library may not “close” and may continue to be a network member, but library services might be significantly downgraded.

*Added in 10/16/08 draft